

15.—The common 'colonial' spider *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch) and its synonyms (Dictynidae: Araneae)

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Abstract

The synonyms of the widespread Australian dictynid spider *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch) are discussed. The nest and web are described and the species is distinguished from *Ixeuticus martius* (Simon).

Introduction

The small dictynid spider, *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch) (fig. 1) is widespread throughout Australia and has aroused interest because of its alleged 'colonialism', a habit rare amongst spiders.

Taxonomy

Ixeuticus candidus (Koch 1872).

Amaurobius candidus Koch, 1872, pp. 333-334, pl. 26 fig. 6.

Ixeuticus candidus Roewer, 1954, p. 1368.

Phryganoporus candidus Lehtinen, 1967, p. 259.

Notes on synonyms

Simon (1908) erected the genus *Phryganoporus* to contain his earlier described species *Amaurobius gausapata* (Simon 1906) and the two new species *P. tubicola* and *nigrinus*. He recorded that the spiders were gregarious or social. I consider these three forms of Simon's are the one species, and synonymous with *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch 1872). This species was described by Koch under the name *Amaurobius candidus* (Koch 1872). The type came from Bowen, Queensland. Roewer (1954) transferred the species to *Ixeuticus* to which genus it has since generally been referred.

Lehtinen (1967) sank the genus *Ixeuticus* in *Badumna* but transferred *candidus* to *Phryganoporus* and synonymised *P. gausapata* with it, thus erecting the new combination: *Phryganoporus candidus* (Koch 1872). However Leech (1971) retained *Ixeuticus* and discussed *I. candidus* but did not consider the status of *Phryganoporus*. One feature formerly regarded as distinguishing *Phryganoporus* from *Ixeuticus* was the undivided cibellum of *Phryganoporus* (Simon 1908 and Main 1964, 1967). Recent more detailed examination of specimens has subsequently shown the cibellum to have a faint dividing line (fig. 2) (specimens in author's collection). Thus this feature can no longer be considered a generic character.

The present author regards *Amaurobius candidus* Koch [= *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch)] and *Phryganoporus gausapata* (Simon) as synonyms but retains the genus *Ixeuticus* into which

the species is placed. *Phryganoporus tubicola* Simon and *P. nigrinus* Simon are here also synonymised with *Ixeuticus candidus* (Koch).

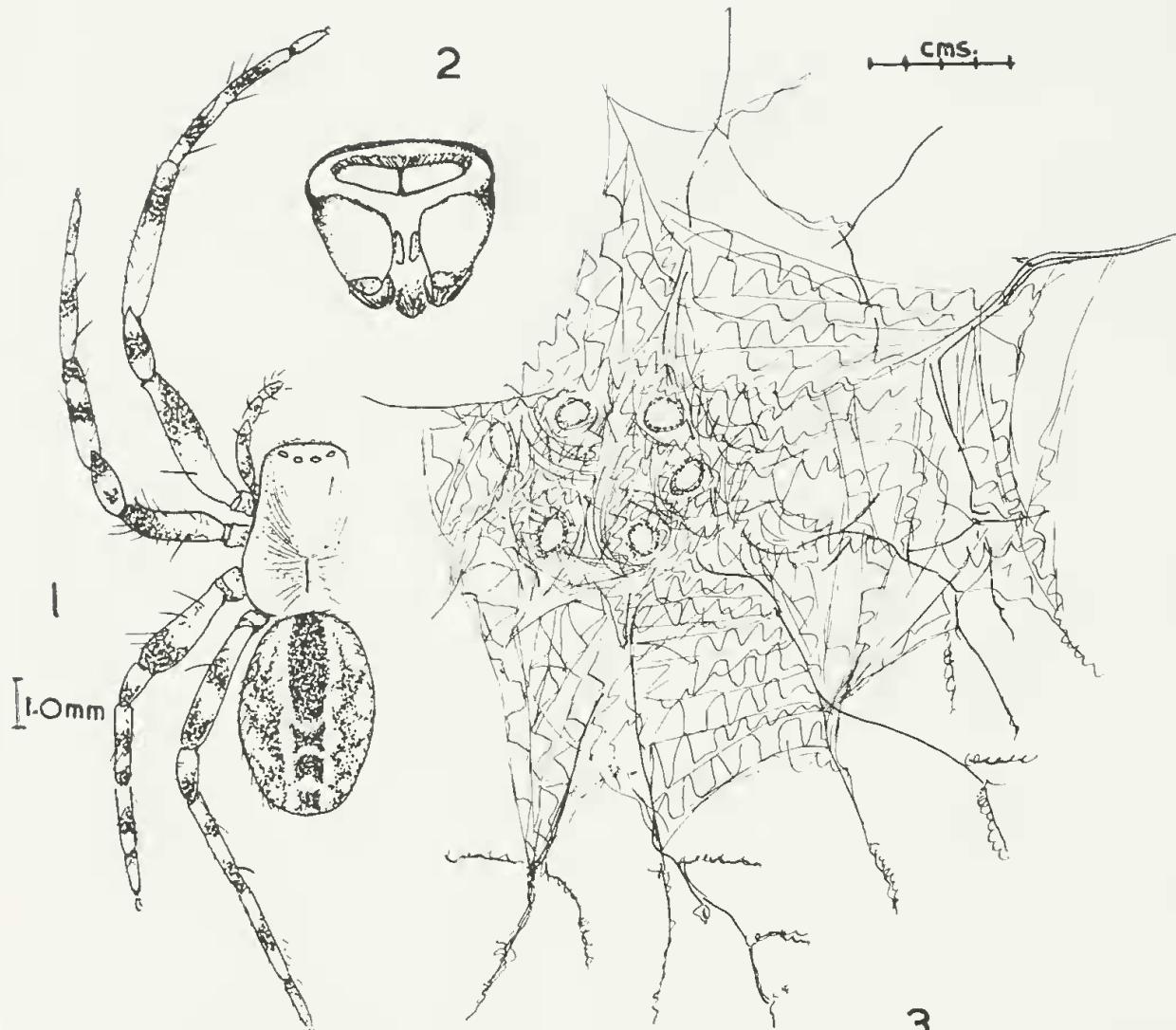
Natural History

Amongst the few records of 'socialism' or web colonies of spiders, the example of *Ixeuticus candidus* has been included, both under this name (McKeown, 1963) and that of *Phryganoporus gausapata* (Simon 1908, Dalmas 1917 and Main 1964, 1967). However from the author's observations it appears that the spiders are gregarious only during the juvenile stages. The nests are made in foliage. Typically, a solitary nest consists of a tough silk tube up to about two inches long, from the mouth of which extends a lace-like snare web. The spider mates in the summer, and eggs are found in the retreat tube in early autumn. Through the winter and spring the young spiderlings construct their own individual snares and tiny retreats around the parent tube until the whole aggregate takes on the appearance of a 'colony' (fig. 3). Later, individual nests are made. However it is not known whether sibling matings take place in the brood colonies or whether mating occurs more randomly after the spiders have dispersed. In any case the gregariousness has not been observed amongst adults.

Discussion on the Distribution of *Ixeuticus candidus* and its Relationship to *Ixeuticus martius*

Dondale (1966) and Leech (1971) emphasise the similarity of *I. candidus* to *I. martius* (Simon) and the latter author even considered the possibility of synonymy. However there are marked differences between the two species. The abdominal pattern of an anterior dorsal median stripe followed by several distinct chevrons (sometimes reduced to a series of spots) and the distinct leg annulations (fig. 1) distinguish *I. candidus* from the less conspicuously marked and generally larger *I. martius*. *I. martius* builds a simple d'oyley-like lace web with short retreat funnel on vegetation, buildings, walls and fences, especially on timber structures (author's observations). *I. candidus* builds a silk tube from which a small silk snare radiates. Hickman (1967) notes these web differences and mentions the "cocoon" like nest of *I. candidus*. He also gives clear diagnostic photographs of spiders of the two species (1967). Main (1964, 1967) figured the spider and a solitary and 'colonial' nest under the name *Phryganoporus*.

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Figures 1-3.—*Ixeticus candidus* (Koch). 1, adult female spider. 2, spinnerets and cribellum. 3, 'colonial' web and retreat tubes of juvenile spiders.

I. martius occurs in New Zealand, eastern Australia and Tasmania. It has also been recorded as an introduction in California; first by Gertsch (1937) who described it under the name of *Hesperauximus sternitzkii*. Marples (1959) subsequently noted the synonymy. Leech (1971) again noted the Californian occurrence and listed localities where it occurs. *I. martius* has not been recorded from Western Australia.

I. candidus occurs in eastern Australia and Tasmania and is common in south-western Australia where it has formerly been identified as *Phryganoporus* (Simon 1908 and Main 1964, 1967).

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- Sanders, Mr. C. C. Geological Survey of Western Australia, Mineral House, 66 Adelaide Terrace, Perth 6000 (1968)
- Seddon, Dr. G. S. 49 Victoria Avenue, Claremont 6010 (1962)
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- Shearer, Mrs. J. 89 Thomas Street, Nedlands 6009 (1949) (Associate member)
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- Smith, Dr. E. B. J. 4 Kinnane Place, Attadale 6156 (1969)
- Smith, Dr. F. G. 30 Vincent Street, Nedlands 6009 (1963)

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- Springett, Dr. J. A. Institute of Forests Research, Todd Avenue, Como 6152 (1969)
- Stephenson, Mr. N. C. Geology Department, University of New England, Armidale, N.S.W. 2315 (1969)
- Stewart, Mr. D. W. R. Forests Department, R. & I. Bank Building, Barrack Street, Perth 6000 (1956)
- Storr, Dr. G. M. Western Australian Museum, Beaufort Street, Perth 6000 (1955)
- Summers, Mr. K. W. A. 20 Kintail Road, Applecross 6153 (1948)
- Taylor, Dr. J. C. 26 Neville Road, Dalkeith 6009 (1970)
- Teichert, Dr. C. Paleontological Institute, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A. (1938)
- Terrill, Mr. S. E. 4 Prosser Street, Bunbury 6230 (1928)
- Thomas, Mr. R. P. 96 Killarney Street, Kalgoorlie 6430 (1969)
- Thomas, Mr. B. P. Department of Mines, P.O. Box 38, Rundle Street, Adelaide, S.A. 5001 (1949)
- Thomson, Dr. J. M. Zoology Department, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Q. 4067 (1962)
- Thornton, Dr. J. W. 28 Osborne Road, East Fremantle 6158 (1964)
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- Tomlinson, Mr. A. R. Department of Agriculture, Jarrah Road, South Perth 6151 (1956)
- Trendall, Dr. A. F. Geological Survey of Western Australia, Mineral House, 66 St. George's Terrace, Perth 6000 (1963)
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- Waring, Prof. H. Zoology Department, University of Western Australia, Nedlands 6009 (1948)
- Waterhouse, Mr. W. K. Agricultural Wing, Narrogin Agricultural Senior High School, Narrogin 6312 (1968)
- Webb, Prof. M. J. Geography Department, University of Western Australia, Nedlands 6009 (1968)
- Whitfield, Mr. G. B. 339 Carrington Street, Hamilton Hill 6163 (1970)
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- Williams, D. A. 6 Rheola Street, West Perth 6005 (1971)
- Willmott, Mr. S. P. WAPET, P.O. Box C1580, Perth 6000 (1962)
- Wilson, Prof. A. F. Geology Department, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Q. 4067 (1949)
- Wilson, Mr. P. G. Western Australian Herbarium, Department of Agriculture, Jarrah Road, South Perth 6151 (1965)
- Woodall, Mr. R. Western Mining Corporation, P.O. Box 71, Kalgoorlie 6430 (1955)
- Wright, Mr. E. A. M. 40 Beatrice Road, Dalkeith 6009 (1956)

Notes:

Dates of election to Membership and, where appropriate, to Honorary Membership, are given in brackets.

Countries outside Australia are given in full. Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria are abbreviated to A.C.T., N.S.W., Q., S.A., Tas. and Vic. respectively. All other addresses are in Western Australia.